

# Engineering the Estuary

You Are Here

Floodwaters and debris damaged homes and farms along this creek in 1964, prompting community members to urge the government to contain Redwood Creek. By 1968, the Army Corps of Engineers had completed levees to harness the creek, funneling it straight to the ocean.

Since construction of the levees, this oxbow sometimes becomes isolated from the rest of the river channel, obstructing salmon migrations.

The levees changed circulation flow in the estuary, which allowed ocean sediments to build up.

No one fully understood that protecting homes and pastureland along Redwood Creek would greatly diminish the place where fish, shorebirds, songbirds, and marine mammals come for food, nesting, growth, and migration: the Redwood Creek estuary.

Juvenile Chinook salmon come to the estuary for its abundant food and stay the summer months before heading out to sea. It is a crucial time in their development. With less water depth and volume, the estuary has become so degraded that fewer salmon can survive. Restoration of the lower reaches of the river and the estuary would not only improve fish productivity but also return habitat to all wildlife.